

THE Flying Serpent

Strange News out of
E S S E X

BEING

A true Relation of a Monstrous Serpent, which
hath divers times been seen at a Parish called Herham on the Mount
within four Miles of Saffron-Walden.

Showing the length, proportion, and bigness of
the Serpent, the place where it commetheth, and what means
thereof to be done.

Also a discourse of other Serpents, and particu-
larily of a Cob which was killed at Saffron-Walden.

The truth of the matter is fully and distinctly set forth.

RICHARD WARDEN, Warden.

The Wardens of the Poor.

The Wardens of the Hospital.

The Wardens of the Hospital.

By

The Wardens of the Hospital.

With Allowance.

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THE



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Strange News out of Essex,

O.R. The Winged Serpent.

Quests, Fish, and news grow stale in three days time, and nothing delights an Englishman saicey so much as new novelties, but for like the Athenians we have still itching Ears after News, which once told we soon grow weary of it and hearken after more, being still desirous of that which is new, which makes so many tautologies in the title of Books; some calling them *new news*, whereas if no news it must needs be new; for also a new Almanack for the Year, 1659. Whereas an Almanack for such a year were as proper, if not proper, or if it be only for that year it can neither be new nor old, for any other. But this news which I shall now relate, as it is certain, being attested by many credible persons, so it is also new, the venomous creature being still living though oftentimes attempted by the inhabitants to be kille^d.

The place of his abode and where he hath been oftentimes seen, is called *Hether*, but most commonly *Hetheram on the Mount*, the Town standing upon a Hill, having many fair Farms and Granges belonging to it, in one of which is the Lodge, near to a Wood called *Birch-Wood*, by reason of the many Birches growing there, In a pasture ground close by the same hath this monstrous Serpent been often seen as he hath lain upon the sides of a Bank, basking and stretching himself out unnothorne, at such time as he did parch the earth with his fulgent beams.

Then when the Sun steines hot be nimblly hurls
His wanton body into numerous curlz;
Gather'd in folds, shoots out his forked tongue
To save himself, and give his foes the wrong.

The first time that he was seen was about the 27 or 28 of May last, a Gentleman's way lying by the place where this Serpent keeps his station, as he ride carelessly on, expecting to receive no hurt as he intended none, on a sudden this Serpent assailed his Horse, affrighting the Rider so much with his monstrous proportion and bold courage to give such an onset, that all in a mizzen he spurr'd his Horse, who almost as much afraid as his Master, with winged speed hasted away, glad that they had escaped such an eminent danger.

Being come home he acquaints his Friends and Neighbors with what he had seen of this monstrous Serpent, especially makes it known to a Neighbour in whose grounds this Serpent doth lurk, warning him to beware of his Cattle, and to use his best endeavours for destroying it, least by protraction of time it might do much mischief when *bad* *Twist* would be but small comfort to him for the losses he might sustain.

Not long after two men of the same Parish walking that way, espy'd this Serpent as he lay on a Hillcock beaking himself against the Sun, where they beheld his full proportion, being as near as they could guess 8 or 9 foot long, the smallest part of him about the bigness of a Mans Leg, on the middle as big as a Mans Thigh, his eyes were very large and piercing, about the bigness of a Sheeps eye, in his mouth he had two row of Teeth which appeared to their sight very White and sharp, and on his back he had two wings indifferent large, but not proportionable to the rest of his body, they judging them not to be above two handfulls long, and when spread, not to extend from the top of one wing to the utmost end of the other above two foot at the most, and therefore altogether too weak to carry such an unwieldy body. These Men though armed with clubs and staves, yet durst not approach to strike this Serpent, neither it seems was the Serpent afraid of them, for raising himself upon his breast about the heighth of two foot, he stood looking on them as daring them to the encounter, like

enrag'd magto

o that of the Theban Serpent, of which thus the Poet thus
Which with a hissing from his Den appears
Amazing both at once the Eyes and ears,

Fire from his threatening eyes like lightning shot

And Syrian blasts exhaled from his dire throat.

Not knowing on a sudden what to do, at last it was resolved by them
that the one should go to the Lodge (which was not far off) to fetch a
Gun, and the other in the mean time to watch the Serpent, who still
stood facing them as though he dreaded no danger that could happen
to him; being as fierce and undaunted as that Serpent of which the
Divine Du-Bartas giveth us this description.

The several Snakes that out of Libia's slime

Are bred, they all in him might well combine,

Nor could Medusa's head had all the blood

In one place fain, produce a deadlier brood,

Whose speckled belly with more spots is deckt

When various Theban marble is bespckt.

But whilst the one was thus gone for the Gun, the Serpent as if he
had waited long enough, folds himself up, and darting forth returns to
the Wood, making such a rustling noise in the hedge as if some
wild Boar, or other large Beast had been breaking thorow it.

About 2 days after the same Serpent was seen by another, who gave
the same description of it with the two former as is above written.

Since which time it hath been seen by divers who have fruitlessly at-
tempted to kill it; for now upo' the light of a morn, it presently betakes
itself to the Wood, where he remains safe, none daring to come nigh
it with Clubs, and for their GUNS in that place where he can hide him-
self in Bushes, and Bents, they are altogether use less; yet has there
been and is still continued to this day, great watching by several
Persons with Musquets and Fowling-pieces and such like to shoot it
but as yet it hath been no Mans good fortune so light on him.

The report of this Serpent is so terrible to the inhabitants thereabout,
that no women, children, nay nor a great many men durst not go near it
the place where he lurks, yet we hear not of any mischief that he hath
yet done, though it be a wonder to most people on what he subsists.

and that hunger does not compell him to range further abroad, seeing he wants not for courage, as may be evidenced in his so facing of the two men aforesaid.

We read in ancient Histories of a Serpent in *Tripolia* a Country in *Asia* that was one hundred twenty and five paces in length, he had a mouth so wide, that he could swallow a man on horseback, and each of his Scales were as big as a large shield.

They also tell us of *Hydra*, a monstrous serpent on the Lake of *Lerna* who having one head cut off, immediately had two other Heads grow up in the same place; this Serpent was at last slain by *Heracles*.

Pliny tells us of the *Rinocerote* a small Serpent which winds himself about the leg of an *Elephant*, who with his Trunk seeking to rid him, when so-thwith, the Serpent creeps into the Trunk, and so kills the Elephant, but long he enjoys not the conquest, for the *Elephant* kills the *Rinocerote* with his fall.

He also tells us of the *Scorpion* a venomous Serpent with 7 feet his sting is in his Tayl; sometimes they eat their young ones, and are of divers colours; the Female is the biggest and hath the sharpest sting. The *Asiatic Scorpion* will not hurt their Countrymen, nor the *Syrian Snakes*, nor *Tyrianish Serpent*.

We also read of a Serpent named *Amphisbena*, who had a head at both ends, as also of a Serpent called *Buazzo* that bigreth, that being found dead, there was a whole Child in his Belly.

The *Lisp* is a very venomous Serpent, they always go two and two together, and if one of them be slain, the other will pursue him so-gently that slew him, and if a man chance to be bitten by this Serpent it is present death if he cut not off the member so bitten. *Cleopatra Queen of Egypt*: being taken by *Caesar* applying these serpents to her body wilfully slew her self.

Now can we here forget the *Viper*, a most venomous Serpent, the Male hath but one Tooth of each side, the Female more, when they engender, the Male putteth his Head in the Female's Mouth, which ch-biteh off, and their young do gnaw their dams belly, and kill her to get out the sooner.

But of all Serpents, the *Busalisk* or *Cockatrice* is the most venomous.

mons of all other; It breaketh stones, blasteth all Plants with his
breath, it burneth every thing it goeth over; no Herb can grow near
the place of his abode, it is poison to poison, and frighteth away all
other Serpents, only with hissing. If a man touch it though with a
long pole it kills him, and if it see a man a far off, it destroys him
with his looks. It is not above a foot in length, of colour between
black and yellow, having very red eyes, a sharp head and a white
spot thereon like a Crown. It goeth not winding like other Serpents
but upright on his breast. One of these most venomous Serpents in
former time lurked about the Meads near Saffron-Walden in Essex,
who by his very sight, killed so many as the Town became almost
depopulated, when a valorous Knight making him a Coat of Chrifal
Glas, boldly went to affail this Cockatrice, but her venomous Nature
not able to indure the purity of that fine meale, she suddenly dyed
in memory whereof his Sword was hung up in Walden Church, the
effigies of the Cockatrice set up in Brats, and a Table hanged close
by wherein was contained all the story of the adventure, but in these
late times of Rebellion, it being taken for a monument of superstition
was by the lawless Souldiers broken in peices, to show they were
also of a venomous Nature as well as the Cockatrice.

We read that in the Reign of King Edward the third, Anno 1350.
near Chipping-Norton in Oxford-shires was found a Serpent having two
heads, and two faces like Women, one face attired of the new fashi-
on of Womens attire, the other face like the old attire, and had
wings like a bat.

Therefore Serpents in this Kingdom are no new thing, and those
far more monstrous and prodigious then this, though this be one of
the greatest that we have heard of in this latter age. Nor is there any
Countries in the whole Worl'd exempted from them, saving only
Creta or Candy an Island of Grece, for which now there is so much
tit betwixt the Christians and Turks, and the Country of Ireland,
which two places do neither breed any venomous Worms, nor hurt-
ful Creatures, nor will any live there if they be brought thither from
Forraign Countries.

And to this purpose I shall tell you a story and to draw towards

conclusion. A certain Countryman coming up to London, a friend of his shewed him all the rarities of the City, amongst others one was Westminster Hall, which his friend told him was build with Iron Wood, the Nature of which is such as it would hinder no venomous Creature night & day. (said the Countryman) if the seats and bars were made of that Wood, the Lawyers must finde me other place to plead in. ok

21 And now for a Corollary to the whole, I shall insert some Verse made by an excellent Poet upon a Serpent found near Milan in Italy.

The venomous Serpent then himself extending,
His speckled Breast, and fiery main all baining,
Above his main his ugly odious Tail
beyt glaz'd Back with fearfu' folds does wrigling trail,
His gaping eyes flashing forth blood and fire
His bony hissing mouth sharp fang'd lips stench express,
With spacious windings routing on the sands
To killeth all that cometh near to hand.

Post-script.

• 22 •
Since I am informed by the Neighbours therabout, that they
tend to keep a constant Watch upon it, till such time as they hope to
kill it. and a

FINIS

Yardes of this Country I have

THIS SERPENT is of that Species call'd RATTLE-SNAKES, which scarcely being known in this part of the World, it may not be improper to add to this Advertisement, the Description given of it by Dr. Horseman, in his short History of *America*, viz.

' The RATTLE-SNAKE, says he, is the most surprizing Creature that is found in *America*, if not in the whole Universe; he is so call'd, from his Snake-like Form, and having several thin hollow horny Substances, resembling the Heads of a Row of *Indian Corn*, loosely jointed into each other, growing at the end of his Tail, and encreasing in their Number Yearly, upon the least tremor of which they strike against each other, and rattle together, so as to be heard at a considerable Distance.

' He is a SERPENT full of Courage, Fire, and Spirit, gives way to no Creature living, is easily provok'd, and when so, always shakes his Rattles, which if not regarded, so as soon to avoid him, he darts or throws himself swiftly forwards, sometimes the whole Length of his Body, with his Mouth wide open, attempting to bite at whoever affronts him. Whatever Creature he bites immediately dies. He has in his Upper Jaw, four Fangs or curv'd Teeth two of each side; sheath'd, and turn over each other, lying backwards with their Points up close to his Jaw-bone, so that he easily shuts his Mouth, but when he opens it for Mischief he unsheathes them, and throws them forward, as a Lyon doth his Talons. These Teeth are hollow quite through, very Sharp and opened, a little above quite down to their Points. As if a part had been slop'd off with some Instrument; The Cavities of which are always fill'd with liquid Poison, so that wherever he wounds, some portion of this Venine Matter must be left in each Puncture, which, tho' not the hundredth part of a Drop in Quantity, is of that infinite Force, Subtilty and Activity, that as soon as mix'd with the Fluids of the Animal, it instantly affects the whole Body, by causing such a præternatural Ferment and Rarefaction of the Blood, and Juices, so as to burst all the Vessels and overflow the Channels through which they pass, and at once put an entire end to Circulation and Life together.

' And yet the Flesh of these Serpents is often eaten by the *Indians*, and the Fat of them; held in high Esteem among them, and is perhaps the greatest Anodyne upon Earth, and no doubt of it, the very Remedy they cure themselves with when bitten by them.

' Nor is this Creature less wonderful in the Manner of Procuring his Prey, than his Power of Destroying it; for as he chiefly lives upon Birds and small Quadrupedes, so to this end he comes out into some open place near the Woods, draws himself up into a Coil, and in that manner lies, exposing his Body to the Beams of the Sun when in its full Lustre; which being cover'd with smooth shining Scales of a very solid Texture, adorn'd with a large Variety of lively Colours most beautifully dispos'd, reflects the Rays of Light with such Force and Strength, and in such an amazing manner, that Birds that accidentally cast their Eyes upon him are arrested in their Flight, and Squirrels allur'd from the very Tops of Trees, and so suddenly confounded, they hastily draw near to the charming Wonder till they come within his fatal reach.

' In short, so very powerful are the Charms of this most astonishing Creature when thus expos'd that no Human Eye can look stedfastly upon him without being soon ensnared. This I dare venture to affirm, because I have my self, more than once gaz'd at these Creatures in the Sun, 'till I had lost almost all my Reason.